

MEMORANDUM

From: Bucharest

TO: THE FILES

FROM: RMW

SUBJ: Rumanian Foreign Office Officials Accept Informal
American Luncheon Invitation

On January 8, 1955 the Chiefs of Mission of Western states, together with four members of the Rumanian Foreign Office, were invited to meet at an informal luncheon EE Deputy Director William CRAWFORD at the home of the U.S. Charge d'Affaires and First Deputy Minister Grigore PREOTEASA, Director of Political Affairs BALANESCU, Director of Protocol IONESCU, and Deputy Protocol Director FRANTESCU received invitations, the latter three accepting. All three subsequently explained to the host in some detail that the First Deputy Minister could not accept the invitation due to the absence of Foreign Office Minister BUGHICI. It was not at that time known that the Foreign Minister was absent nor are his whereabouts yet known. It was reportedly the first time that Rumanian Foreign Office officials of the rank of Mr. Balanescu and Mr. Ionescu have accepted invitations to informal affairs at Western homes. The idea had been previously discussed with the ranking Western mission chief, British Minister MacDERMOT, in the interest of proper Western coordination. Mr. MacDermot supported the appropriateness of the experiment. British Legation officers had previously invited successfully lower ranking members of the Rumanian Foreign Office to their homes.

Though little information of substance developed during the four hours the Rumanian guests stayed, it could not help but be a profitable affair in a country where Foreign Office officials have isolated themselves from the Western diplomatic corps. Again, the invitations were sent out after the Paris ratifications and while not proving anything it is a fact at least worth noting.

The Rumanians were obviously glad to be let out. They smiled, they spoke French fluently, they absorbed the surroundings and put in their mouths everything possible including food, candy, cigars, cigarettes, wine, cocktails, highballs, etc. They maintained their established individual personalities, i.e., Mr. Balanescu is round, short, highly intelligent, quick, witty, cagey. Mr. Ionescu is uneasy, shifty, reticent, oily. Frantescu is weak, refined, handsome, nostalgic, cautious, unhappy. All were particularly impressed, as had the Russians been, with Mr. Crawford's superior linguistic abilities, which were exercised to advantage while in Bucharest. Even somewhat unhappy Argentine Charge d'Affaires DELFINO finally found a friend and was able to hold the center of conversation for the first time in Bucharest since his arrival three months ago.

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The following pieces of conversation might be worth noting:

1. Balanescu initiated a toast to "peace" and made motions towards inviting the whole table in. It had been previously decided that toasts would be avoided if possible, and the opportunity was seized to make the toast individual rather than group. The Legation officer added "freedom, justice and truth" to Mr. Balanescu's proffered glass and made it a private affair.

2. Mr. Balanescu was asked by Mr. Crawford whether Rumania planned to rearm, as stated in the press following the Paris ratifications. Mr. Balanescu cautiously ducked this one, first by indicating that everything in the press should not be believed and then adding that Rumania would take whatever measures necessary to prevent being "surprised".

3. Mr. Balanescu reported that Rumania had a small problem of sovereignty in its territorial waters. The "Island of Serpents" was apparently claimed by others. It is located at the mouth of the Danube River.

(French Minister)

4. Mr. Francfort described his trip to Braila to observe the status of the ships of the French Danube River Company, the last remaining private, foreign-owned asset in Rumania. Mr. Balanescu was asked if American ships would similarly be allowed to operate in Danubian waters. He answered "anything but destroyers".

5. Mr. Crawford directed many questions at Mr. Ionescu, who was able to say nothing during the whole luncheon. Mr. Francescu was careful to watch Mr. Ionescu whenever questions were directed at him (Mr. Francescu). Mr. Crawford was told that Ana PAUKER reportedly had a minor government job.

6. Mr. Ionescu expressed his view to the host that such luncheons were "most helpful in reaching understandings between peoples". He was curious to have explained to him what the unemployment problem amounted to in the United States. Much was made of the barriers to understanding which the press created by distorted articles. Mr. Ionescu did not know why the three-power note of November 29, 1954 had not been presented to Rumanian readers in full.

7. Mr. Francfort and Mr. THESLEFF (Finnish Charge d'Affaires), both of whom have had stateside experience, most helpfully removed certain expressed illusions of Mr. Balanescu's about the lot of workers in the United States.

8. Mr. Crawford was told by Turkish Charge d'Affaires BETIN that in the absence of more time he would summarize his understanding of his northern neighbor and the policy most practicable for dealing with the Soviets: "In effect, Russians should be

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"treated as Orientals", "scratch a Russian and you find a Tatar".
"They will take everything they can get away with, often even when it is against their self-interest". Mr. Betin complained that Mr. Balanescu intentionally broke up his confidential discussion with Mr. Crawford.

2. Mr. Francfort was told by Mr. Balanescu that there was no purpose in engaging in polemics about the popular support in France for the Paris agreements and that there remained broad ground for fruitful discussion between France and Rumania".

The Rumanian guests left at 5:30 p.m.

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